

Drawing Amendments:

Figure 2 has been revised by deleting reference numeral "28" and adding reference numeral --34--; a replacement sheet, showing Figure 2 with the foregoing revisions, is enclosed.

Figure 6 has been revised by adding --pan 92-- to receive racking grid 72. A replacement sheet, showing Figure 6 with pan 92 incorporated therein is presented herewith.

Each replacement sheet is identified in the top margin as a "Replacement Sheet."

REMARKS

The instant Amendment responds to the Office Action of March 20, 2006 within three months. Thus, no extension fee is believed to be due and owing.

Formal matters in the specification have been corrected, and drawing revisions have been made to Figures 2 and 6, to enhance the clarity of the application. Replacement sheets have been provided.

Claims 1-11 have been cancelled, and original claims 12-18 are now presented for consideration on their merits. Claim 12 is independent in format, and claims 13-18 are dependent thereon.

Claim 12 is drafted to emphasize the novel, and unobvious aspects of applicants' jerky dehydrator. Clauses (a) and (b) set out generally features of known food baskets, as reflected in the patents cited by the Examiner. Clause (c) introduced a hinge clip 24, 26. Clause (d) points out that extensions 42, 44 project beyond the opposite ends of first or upper horizontal rod 30 of first grate 20, as shown in Figure 2. Clause (d) also notes that anchors 46, 48, to receive springs, are formed on the opposite side members of the second grate 22.

Clause (e) points out that the extensions and anchors are located at different elevations, as shown in Figures 3 and 5. Clause (f) stresses that the springs 50, 52 extend at an acute angle between the extensions and anchors, so that an upwardly directed force biases the grates 20, 22 toward each other to securely retain the food product placed within the basket, as shown in Figure 5. The extensions and anchors are located on the perimeter of the basket so that the capacity of the basket is maximized. The hinge clips permit the movement of one grate relative to the other, while the strategically positioned springs

impart equalized pressure between the cooperating grids despite the shrinkage of the food product retained within the basket.

Applicant's basket is generally rectangular, when viewed in side elevation, and does not assume a converging, or V-shape, as found in prior art devices, as the moisture in the food product diminishes during the dehydration process, and the food product diminishes in volume. Thus, the yield of product by applicant's basket is greater than that produced by known baskets of comparable size, and is of more uniform, and better, quality.

Dependent claim 13 notes the specific location of the extensions, while dependent claim 14 recites the specific location of anchors 46, 48. Dependent claim 15 is drawn to handle 40 with dependent legs 64, 66, shown in Figure 2.

Dependent claims 16, 17, and 18 are drawn to racking grid 72, with upstanding pins 84, 86 projecting above spines 76, 78, as shown in Figure 4. Receptacle tubes 68, 70, on the basket, are slipped over the pins to lock several baskets in fixed position on racking grid 72. The grid, once loaded, is placed into pan 92, which, in turn, is placed in an oven, as shown in Figure 6, to dry the excess moisture from the food product retained in each basket.

Claims 16-18 are presented in lieu of claims 6 and 7, now cancelled; claims 6 and 7 were indicated, in the Office Action of March 20, 2006, to contain allowable subject matter.

The prior art cited, and applied, by the Examiner in the first Office Action was carefully considered in drafting new claims 12-18. The prior art patents, taken individually or in any combination suggested by the prior art, do not anticipate, or render obvious, applicants' invention, as presently recited in the claims of record.

Miller is discussed, at length, on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action. Miller relies upon latches 92, 93 to retain the outwardly extending ends of hanger bars 86, 87 atop vertical grill

elements 73, 74 in proper relationship. However, Miller makes no mention of anchors and extensions on the first and second grates, nor of springs extending therebetween, at an acute angle, to impart constant pressure upon the food product undergoing dehydration.

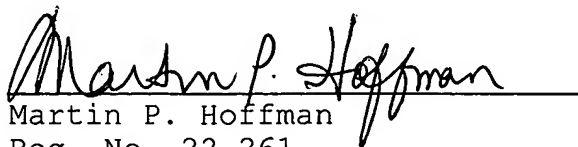
Figures 2 and 5 of Di Cuia show springs 20 disposed between adjacent racks 19, at the lower end thereof to serve as hinges; note column 2, lines 8-12. Assuming that the teachings of Miller and Di Cuia may be combined, the resulting composite structure does not disclose, or suggest, the specific spring mounting arrangement expressed in clauses (d), (e) and (f), which contribute to the superior functioning of applicants' food dehydrator.

Wagner, McCarney and the several other patents cited by the Examiner have also been reviewed, and taken into account in the drafting of claims 12-18.

For the reasons recited above, the instant Amendment is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Prompt, and favorable, consideration is believed to be in order.

If the Examiner disagrees with the undersigned attorney's positive assessment of the situation, and/or if he believes that an interview would expedite prosecution, he is invited to call the undersigned attorney at 703-415-0100.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Martin P. Hoffman", is written over a horizontal line.

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May 24, 2006

Attorney Docket No: A-8681.AMA/eb